



U.S. Department of Justice

Ronald C. Machen Jr.
*United States Attorney for the
District of Columbia*

*Judiciary Center
555 Fourth St. N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530*

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, August 16, 2011

For Information Contact:

Public Affairs

(202) 252-6933

<http://www.justice.gov/usao/dc/news/2011/apr/news.html>

Virginia Man Pleads Guilty to Attempted Kidnaping and Assault In Abduction of Two-Year-Old Family Member - Defendant Used Toddler As Bargaining Chip To Get To His Wife -

WASHINGTON - Jose Sanchez-Amaya, 34, of Haymarket, Virginia, has pled guilty to felony and misdemeanor charges stemming from the abduction of his two-year-old great-niece during a domestic dispute, U.S. Attorney Ronald C. Machen Jr. announced.

Sanchez-Amaya pled guilty earlier this month in the Superior Court of the District of Columbia to charges of attempted kidnaping and simple assault. He is to be sentenced October 6, 2011 by the Honorable Robert I. Richter. Under the court's voluntary sentencing guidelines, Sanchez-Amaya will likely face up to two years of imprisonment on the attempted kidnaping charge and up to 180 days of incarceration on the simple assault charge.

According to the government's evidence, on the afternoon of June 3, 2011, Sanchez-Amaya and his wife had an argument at their home in Virginia. During this argument, he called his wife's family and told them to come and take his wife out of the house. The family then drove to the couple's home and picked up Sanchez-Amaya's wife. While the family was en route back to Washington, D.C., the defendant called them multiple times, demanding to speak to and see his wife. When his demands were denied, Sanchez-Amaya drove to a retail store operated by his wife's family in Northwest Washington, looking for her there.

Sanchez-Amaya entered the store and spoke to an employee, a family friend who had been asked to take care of the defendant's great-niece, then two years old. He held the child and then suddenly ran out of the store with her. The employee ran after Sanchez-Amaya, yelling for him to stop and come back with the child. When the employee tried to take the child back, the defendant knocked her down and drove away with the toddler.

Sanchez-Amaya later made contact with the child's father, who was with Sanchez-Amaya's wife, and told him that he had his daughter. Sanchez-Amaya told the toddler's father that he'd give him his daughter back when he could see and speak to his wife. The toddler's father agreed,

and asked the defendant to meet them near the Washington Monument. The defendant brought the toddler to the agreed upon location, and when he saw that his wife had been brought to the location, he allowed the child's father to take her from the car. While Sanchez-Amaya spoke to his wife, police in the area were alerted to the kidnaping, and they arrested him.

In announcing the plea, U.S. Attorney Machen commended the efforts of Metropolitan Police Department Officers Oscar Pedrozo, of the Third District, and Ellen Bader of the Seventh District. He also praised the work of Officers Daniel Bahamonde, Jeffrey Hendrickson, Andrew Lauro, Kenneth Spencer, and Caleb Williams of the U.S. Park Police, and expressed appreciation to Melissa Milam, the Domestic Violence Advocate who worked extensively with the families involved in this case. Finally, U.S. Attorney Machen expressed his appreciation to Paralegal Jason Manuel and Legal Assistant Charmonique Price, who prepared the case for indictment, and Assistant U.S. Attorney Mervin A. Bourne, Jr., who investigated and prosecuted the case.

11-357

###